

Message Text

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FM AMCONSUL LENINGRAD

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 1834

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: ABLD, UR

SUBJECT: LENINGRAD RESIDENCE CHANDELIERS

REF: A. STATE 297877

B. LENINGRAD 1809

1. REFTEL (A) LEADS US TO BELIEVE THAT WE HAVE NOT ADEQUATELY SET FORTH THE REAL ALTERNATIVES WE CONFRONT ON THE QUESTION OF THE SOVIET CHANDELIERS SINCE IT IS NOT POSSIBLE TO REPLACE THEM WITH THE RIO CHANDELIERS. WE APOLOGIZE FOR NOT HAVING MADE THIS SITUATION CLEAR BEFORE AND WILL TRY TO DO SO NOW.

2. THE TWO LARGE SOVIET CHANDELIERS ARE IN THE MAIN SOLONS. A MEDIUM-SIZED SOVIET CHANDELIER IS IN THE ORNATE ENTRANCE STAIRCASE. TWO SMALL SOVIET CHANDELIERS ARE IN THE CONGRESSIONAL GUEST ROOM AND ONE IS IN THE STAIRCASE TO THE SECOND FLOOR ALONG WITH TWO SMALL WALL SCONCES. TOTAL - EIGHT LIGHTING FIXTURES.

3. THE SO-CALLED RIO CHANDELIERS ARRIVED ON POST IN AUGUST 1973 AND WERE FULLY UNPACKED ONLY IN THE FALL OF 1974. THE BILL OF LADING INDICATED 7 CRYSTAL CHANDELIERS; WHAT WE RECEIVED WERE VARIOUS POORLY PACKED BOXES OF CHANDELIER PARTS WITH A GREAT DEAL OF BREAKAGE, SOME OF WHICH OBVIOUSLY HAD TAKEN PLACE DURING DISSEMBLY. IN CONSULTATION WITH SOVIET EXPERTS FROM "RESTAVRATOR", WE FINALLY IDENTIFIED THREE CRYSTAL CHANDELIERS (WITH GLASS ARMS AND FRAMES) AND THREE WROUGHT-IRON AND CRYSTAL CHANDELIERS. WITH FUNDS MADE AVAILABLE BY THE DEPARTMENT (STATE 190595,

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AUGUST 29, 1974) WE ARRANGED FOR "RESTAVRATOR" TO DO WHAT IT

COULD.

4. BY JULY 1975, "RESTAVRATOR" HAD MANAGED TO RESTORE COMPLETELY ONE CRYSTAL CHANDELIER AND HANG IT IN THE LIBRARY OF THE RESIDENCE, TO RESTORE PARTIALLY ONE CRYSTAL CHANDELIER (IT IS MISSING FOUR ARMS AND LIGHTS) AND HANG IT IN THE STATE DINING ROOM, AND TO CREATE OUT OF REMNANTS OF THE CRYSTAL CHANDELIERS ONE SMALL SIX-LIGHT CHANDELIER (NOW IN THE UPSTAIRS DINING ROOM) AND ONE SMALL (ONE-LIGHT) CRYSTAL DROP TO HANG IN THE INTERNAL STAIRCASE. ALL OF THESE WERE HUNG WHERE PREVIOUSLY THERE HAD BEEN A BARE LIGHT BULB HANGING FROM A WIRE. NO RPT NO CHANDELIERS ARE HANGING IN ANY FAMILY BEDROOMS.

5. THE WROUGHT-IRON CHANDELIERS ARE QUITE OUT OF KEEPING WITH THE RESIDENCE BUT ONE HAS BEEN RESTORED AND HANGS IN THE MAIN ENTRANCE TO THE OFFICE BUILDING -- ALSO AN ORNATE AREA. "RESTAVRATOR" BELIEVES THAT IT MAY BE POSSIBLE TO RESTORE ONE MORE OF THESE OUT OF THE REMAINING PARTS, ALTHOUGH THIS IS NOT CERTAIN.

6. IN SUMMARY, NONE OF THE RIO CHANDELIERS IS NOW INSTALLED IN A NON-REPRESENTATIONAL AREA (INCLUDING THE SMALL ONE IN THE UPSTAIRS DINING ROOM, FREQUENTLY USED FOR REPRESENTATIONAL ENTERTAINING, AND WHICH, IN ANY CASE, IS FAR TOO SMALL TO USE DOWNSTAIRS). IT IS THEREFORE NOT POSSIBLE TO USE THESE CHANDELIERS TO REPLACE THE SOVIET CHANDELIERS IF WE RETURN THE LATTER TO UPIP. (THE WROUGHT-IRON CHANDELIER NOW IN THE ENTRANCE TO THE OFFICE BUILDING AND THE ONE LIKE IT WHICH MIGHT YET BE RESTORED ARE SIMPLY A WRONG STYLE FOR THE MAIN SALONS OF THE RESIDENCE). THE QUESTION THUS REMAINS AS INDICATED PARA 3 REFTL (B): ARE WE PREPARED TO DESTROY THE UTILITY OF THE RESIDENCE FOR REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSES FOR AN INDEFINITE PERIOD AS WE SEEK ALTERNATIVE LIGHTING FIXTURES. AND WE STILL HAVE TO ASSUME THAT SUCH FIXTURES -- WHEN AND IF THEY CAN BE FOUND -- WILL COST A CONSIDERABLE AMOUNT.

7. UNDER THESE CIRCUMSTANCES, IT APPEARS TO US THAT WE MIGHT BE WELL ADVISED, AS WE HAVE ALREADY RECOMMENDED, TO ACCEPT THE SOVIET OFFER, DESPITE ITS APPARENT HIGH COST OVER THE LONG-TERM, AS THE BEST WE ARE GOING TO GET. INCLUDING THE SPECIFIC LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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CHANDELIER ANNUAL COST OF RUBLES 746 IN THE ANNUAL RESIDENCE LEASE AFTER JULY 1, 1978 WOULD ONLY RAISE THE LATTER TO RUBLES 17,724 PER ANNUM WHICH STILL REMAINS A LOW RENTAL FOR THE RESIDENCE.

8. IF, DESPITE OUR RECOMMENDATION, THE DEPARTMENT CANNOT AGREE TO ACCEPT THE SOVIET OFFER, THEN WE STRONGLY URGE THAT, BEFORE WE TELL UPIP TO REMOVE ITS CHANDELIERS, AN FBO INTERIOR

DECORATOR BE SENT HERE TO DETERMINE WHAT REPLACEMENT CHANDELIERS ARE REQUIRED AND WHERE THEY CAN BE OBTAINED (OBVIOUSLY NOT HERE). ONCE THE REPLACEMENTS WERE ON SITE AND READY FOR INSTALLATION, UPIP WOULD BE NOTIFIED TO REMOVE THE SOVIET CHANDELIERS. TO REMOVE THE SOVIET CHANDELIERS WITHOUT REPLACEMENTS ON SITE WOULD, WE REITERATE, NEEDLESSLY DEPRECIATE THE RESIDENCE FOR MOST REPRESENTATIONAL PURPOSES AND STRIKE MANY OFFICIAL GUESTS AS BOTH ODD AND RATHER LAUGHABLE, WITH OBVIOUS DAMAGE TO THE IMAGE WE TRY TO PROJECT HERE.

9. ACTION REQUESTED: RECONSIDERATION IN LIGHT OF REAL SITUATION HERE OF OUR RECOMMENDATION THE SOVIET OFFER BE ACCEPTED. IF THIS NOT POSSIBLE, CONSIDERATION OF RECOMMENDATION TO ARRANGE FOR PURCHASE AND SHIPMENT OF REPLACEMENT CHANDELIERS RECOMMENDED BY DECORATOR BEFORE ARRANGING REMOVAL OF SOVIET CHANDELIERS.

10. WITH REFERENCE TO QUERY IN PARA 3 REFTTEL (A), WE HAVE NO EXPLANATION FOR LOWER FIGURE CITED IN LENINGRAD 502, JUNE 5, 1974. RECORD SHOWS THAT SOVIETS HAVE CONSISTENTLY SINCE MAY 27, 1974 QUOTED ASSESSED VALUATION AS RUBLES 8,991.

11. SEPTTEL WILL REPORT ON PARA 4 REFTTEL (A).
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